

THE EVENING STAR.

WASHINGTON, March 11, 1893.

CROSBY'S NOTES. Editor.

THE EVENING STAR has a regular and permanent circulation in Washington three times larger than that of any other newspaper in the city. As a result, it is the most powerful medium it has no competitor.

There is murder in the overhead wire. So long as the wire is above ground it threatens public safety. Never was this truth more horridly supported than at the awful fire which yesterday destroyed four millions of dollars in Boston, resulted in many deaths and maimed nearly two score of those who escaped from the flames with their lives. Sometimes it seems as though men and women had to be sacrificed after some horrible fashion, but at least four human beings were unnecessarily hurried to their last account by reason of obstructive wires, which prevented workmen from accomplishing their noble purpose. Three men and one woman clinging to the stonework of the Ames building and looked down through the flames and smoke at the sympathizing but helpless multitude. Efforts to rescue them were ineffectual. A network of wires intervened. To remain on the roof was certain death; to fall meant mutilation, but recovery was perhaps possible. Forced to action by the unendurable heat the unfortunate dropped on to and through the obstructive metal to the street-sides below. How many of the ladders were rendered useless by the wires may never be known. Will this lesson be unheeded? Can civilized communities longer trifle with an evil that has no right to exist? It has been proven beyond dispute that telegraphic, telephonic and electric light service by underground wires is more satisfactory than by overhead wires. It is more expensive, but will that consideration be permitted to prevail? With human life in the balance shall dollars outweigh?

THE STAR has already outlined the general plan of the recently organized Sanitary League of the District of Columbia. The need for such work as the league was organized to do will be set forth in an address to be delivered by Dr. J. S. Billings, U. S. A., in the Columbian University lecture hall next Tuesday evening. Dr. Billings will direct the sanitary work of the league, as he is chairman of the committee having in charge sanitary matters. Aside from his eminence as a sanitary expert Dr. Billings' recent investigations for the census bureau bearing on the death rate in Washington will make the address of Tuesday night one of unusual interest. Everyone is invited to attend Tuesday night and to lend his co-operation to the work of the league whose aim is to remove from Washington, so far as possible, the danger due to unsanitary conditions that constantly threaten the lives of the people and that might become appalling in case of a visitation of cholera or other epidemic.

Washington hotel-keepers are rather glad that Mr. Cleveland did not make a pre-inaugural announcement of his intentions as to ex-officials, but the sufferers are less philosophical. From avenue corridors, smoking rooms and street car, a wall of profane anguish goes up, for in all places of public resort are men who disturbed much cash and vocal energy last fall with the idea that such investments could hardly be less profitable than they found them to be eight years ago. And Mr. Cleveland fished and refreshed himself with the saline ozons of Buzzard Bay and thereupon he reached the conclusion which he has thrust into the hearts and pocket books of numberless patriots, some of whom do not hesitate to make wide-open remarks upon the art of political bunco-steering. But there is no frown on the visage of those good men and true who failed to reach the fonder during the first Cleveland administration. No, indeed. The crowd is smiling all the long and away through the night into the morning watches of tomorrow. The law of compensation is operating smoothly and the government at Washington still lives.

Charitable suggestions are always in order. Elsewhere in THE STAR is a communication in which is advanced the proposition that such money as may be available from the inaugural committee's accounts are balanced might be devoted to a fund the interest of which should be used for the benefit of disabled members of the local fire department or the widows and children of deceased firemen. The idea is thoroughly good and should be heartily supported. After yet is the additional proposition that the liberally-inclined among the subscribers all day long and away through the night into the morning watches of tomorrow, the law of compensation is operating smoothly and the government at Washington still lives.

Another picture of Columbus is said to have been discovered in Naples. This one will probably have whiskers like Senator Peffer's on it.

Extraordinary, even to the phenomenal point, is the spectacle of an English merchant, a leading member of the Golden Club, advancing an argument which, carried to its logical conclusion, would deprive Great Britain of the commercial supremacy which is now the boast of forty millions of people, yet that is who invites American attention in the March Forum under the title of "New Era for the United States." The writer is Mr. George Webb Medley, who for years has been active in English politics and in the unfeigned field of social and broadly economic literature. Starting out with a tribute to the greatness of this country Mr. Medley speedily reaches the conclusion that its prosperity is not due to its "free trade" but to the freedom of commerce between the various states of the Union, and that such an upheaval as took place last November would not have taken place did not the evils of protection against the outside world outweigh the benefits of internal free trade. As his basic fact Mr. Medley produces the statement that Great Britain, so far as manufactures, navigation and international commerce are concerned, is in the forefront and generally much in advance of all competitors; a result which is declared to be due to the benign sway of absolute free trade in the British Isles while other nations groan beneath the despotism of protective tariffs. The part played in the development of American and Asiatic countries is cleverly sketched and there is tremendous force in the figures, which show that in 1890 the United States exports of goods and commodities reached a total of \$1,000,000,000, while the custom house amounted to seven hundred and forty-nine millions sterling, being at the rate of about twenty pounds per head of population, the figures for France and Germany being about ten pounds and five shillings per head and for the United States five pounds and five shillings. It is true, too, that of the effective tonnage of the world's ocean-going ships, steam and sailing, British owns more than one-half, and there is nothing unreasonable in the computation that the world stands indebted to her through financial security and investments—in no less a sum than ten thousand millions of dollars, but it is not easy to see why a representative English investor should encourage by arguing in favor of free trade the United States, to lower the royal emblems and run up in its place the stars and stripes. Mr. Medley is satisfied that British commercial supremacy has no other foundation than free trade, and says emphatically that "in the great

world competition the non-protective country, other things being equal, must win against the protective, for so long as human motives remain what they are, so long as human nature remains what it is, men will, under compulsion, buy in the cheapest market and sell in the dearest," but he says no apparent heed to the fact that the evils he portrays have been legislatively "prevented" here for many years, nor does he explain why—these for his argumentative purposes—adverse conditions prevail in the United States and his fellow Americans should be so heavily in American difficulties and manufacturing interests. That they do be confessed, admitting that the part which British capital has played and is playing is almost beyond computation. It is, he says, imperfectly known even by those who take part in what is going on and not at all by the thinking crowd. British capital to a fabulous amount is embarked in the United States in railroads, breweries, mines, land companies and industrial undertakings of all sorts, while constant additions are being made to the investments. That keen financiers should avoid the allurements of the British markets and of their own motion place vast sums out at interest in the United States gives Mr. Medley's contention an appearance of insincerity. His question, "Will the United States adopt a policy of industrial and commercial freedom?" is in no danger of an immediate and affirmative reply, for but a little while ago the leader of the democratic House of Representatives declared himself an advocate of the Walker tariff, and the Walker tariff, as Mr. Medley probably knows, was both as to legislative intent and administrative execution, a protective tariff. Mr. Medley admits that the entry of the United States into the international arena as a free trading country would lead eventually to great changes involving displacements of capital and labor throughout the world in the largest scale, causing disturbance, loss and suffering in various directions. It will be some time, no matter how radical a few politicians may be, before this nation will attempt to swallow so drastic a purgative as this suggestive capitalist has compounded and now displays. Bearing in mind the tremendous immigration of the middle and lower British classes and the sturdy movement of British wealth hitherward we shall listen cautiously to the seductive whisperings of Mr. Medley.

By a large majority the French Chamber of Deputies has decided to levy a tax of ten francs on each piano used in France. That is just exactly the conclusion to be expected from such an impractical aggregation of amateur dilettantes as made to French legislation, and that the tariff is already located most to evident to mankind. What have the inane instruments ever done to offend? Why should not the tax be imposed upon the performer? If Congress ever starts out to wrestle with the great army of American pianists THE STAR hopes it will be much more equitable than the Chamber of Deputies has been. To be absolutely fair it would be necessary to compel every one who plays a piano to undergo the ordeal of a musical examination and on the results base a sliding tax—who plays worst pays most—which would meet most admirably a great national exigency. Young persons whose repertoire is limited to one or two of the commonest airs or who insist upon executing sacred selections with one or two fingers would then be subjected to a severe penalty for those penurious ones whose inability to play would compel heavy taxation and who might possibly seek recompense by refraining from having their pianos tuned. But even with the provisions that have been outlined the law would be far from sufficient unless it included the conscientious ones who torture their neighborhoods with cornets and clarinets and piccolos and all such misused instruments, before whom helpless mortality falls down more promptly than did the subjects of Darius when the sackbut and the psalter and the dulcimer sounded the monarch's command. If it be proper and by custom lawful to throw bootlegs and such like bric-a-brac at fellow citizens, why not the playing of "Annie Rooney" by a violinist of this week's standing be a personal offense, and give to him or her who performs upon the accordion a non-disturbing limitation of "Way Down Upon the Swanne River" not less than ninety days in the workhouse. Then would this be a truly happy land and the great American nation would flourish beyond the brightest prophetic imaginings. Disposed of possession of the tortured nerves could at once recover their equanimity and lose their highly cultivated instincts toward profanity. Those French legislators are pretty good fellows, but they are intensely impractical.

Wouldn't the gamblers who are now doing incalculable damage to New Jersey's reputation be somewhat surprised if the good citizens of that state organized a legislature of their own and upset some of the plans that promise greater degradation for the commonwealth upon which so much facetiousness has been showered. It is now intimated that New York "sports" are about to have the Jersey legislature—which they appear to possess a bill that will permit the establishment and operation of what is to be known as the Casino Sporting Club. Those who are supposed to know all about the scheme say that it is the most comprehensive ever mapped out and that its success would mean a big inclosed reservation within the bounds of which Monte Carlo and his kind would be at home in a pretty theater, a pavilion for prize fights and a gigantic gambling hall be the main attractions in the vicious program. Decent Jerseymen are restive because of present affliction, and if the evils of today become exaggerated active hostilities are easily provoked. And then the glaringly immoral statement will have to make for the tall timber.

Out of the discomfort and suffering and death consequent upon the meteorological conditions prevalent here on Saturday last has arisen national outcry for a change of the inaugural date. For years THE STAR has been earnest in its advocacy of a later day, and the country has been returning with approval as took place last November would not have taken place did not the evils of protection against the outside world outweigh the benefits of internal free trade. As his basic fact Mr. Medley produces the statement that Great Britain, so far as manufactures, navigation and international commerce are concerned, is in the forefront and generally much in advance of all competitors; a result which is declared to be due to the benign sway of absolute free trade in the British Isles while other nations groan beneath the despotism of protective tariffs. The part played in the development of American and Asiatic countries is cleverly sketched and there is tremendous force in the figures, which show that in 1890 the United States exports of goods and commodities reached a total of \$1,000,000,000, while the custom house amounted to seven hundred and forty-nine millions sterling, being at the rate of about twenty pounds per head of population, the figures for France and Germany being about ten pounds and five shillings per head and for the United States five pounds and five shillings. It is true, too, that of the effective tonnage of the world's ocean-going ships, steam and sailing, British owns more than one-half, and there is nothing unreasonable in the computation that the world stands indebted to her through financial security and investments—in no less a sum than ten thousand millions of dollars, but it is not easy to see why a representative English investor should encourage by arguing in favor of free trade the United States, to lower the royal emblems and run up in its place the stars and stripes. Mr. Medley is satisfied that British commercial supremacy has no other foundation than free trade, and says emphatically that "in the great

Even though some of Mr. Kilgore's claims be disregarded there is nothing to prevent him from leaving footprints in the sands of time in the good old way.

Ex-officio holders are fearing that Cleveland has taken that "mill will never grind with the water that is past" proverb too much to heart.

Some one has asked scientifically, "Is the Climate Changing?" There are earnest, wide-spread hopes that it is.

Mr. Cleveland has not yet asked Tammany to lend him its tomahawk to slice patronage pie.

Wonder if Brother C. Buckley Kilgore will succeed in kicking himself into a comfortable position?

THE WEEK.

The change in the administrative officers of the government has, of course, been the event of the week at home. The nominations for heads of the civil departments were sent in on Monday, and, as was expected, were confirmed at once. The Senate then adjourned until Tuesday, when John Quincy was named for first assistant secretary of state. E. A. Collins, consul general to London, ex-Gov. I. P. Gray, minister to Mexico, and R. A. Maxwell, fourth assistant postmaster general, were also named. The confirmation of the President's appointments caused no little stir by withdrawing from the Senate the Hawaiian treaty transmitted to that body by the preceding administration. The confirmation of the gold from the treasury has been the problem confronting Secretary Carlisle. The "free gold" that is not included in the gold reserve of \$100,000,000—less than a million, and all sorts of rumors were circulated as to what the government would do. An offer from the west to furnish three millions of gold for mints, and the fact that the government was not willing to take the old flag over the Paris at New York. The mystery of the missing steamship *Naronic*, many days overdue at New York, has aroused universal interest as to her whereabouts. Rumors have ranged along the coast, the melting snows have swollen the rivers and New York city and Long Island have been shaken by an earthquake that didn't cause any damage. The number of deaths resulting from the inauguration day have been reported and have added so many arguments for changing the date of that ceremony. Municipal elections took place in Maine and New York, but did not develop any significant political change since last November. The Chicago council has in future to furnish three millions of gold for mints, and the fact that the government was not willing to take the old flag over the Paris at New York. 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